626 661 Some particularly timid institutional directors hastened to repaint their offices so as to cover the Belorussian ornamentation. /35/

It cannot be asserted that this "purge" of everything national in Belorussia, which so often led to absurdities, was carried out as a result of special directives. It was just that the new leaders, particularly those who were above suspicion with regard to the national work, hastened to insure themselves against any unexpected troubles.

626 217 There was total havoc in the Belorussian State Museum. Everything was radically rearranged, there were changes in the plans of the work, and all the museum's activity was subjected to merciless criticism. The brigade of the Department of Marxist-Leninism of the Belorussian Academy of Sciences, comprising L. Bobrovich, I. Shpilevskii, M. Grinblat, A. Levdanskii, in its "exposure" Etnografiia muzeinoe delo /Ethnography in the Museums/ wrote, "The National-Democrats chose ethnography as one of their basic objectives. Ethnography gives wide scope to the primary aims of the Nats-Dems . . . The ethnographic interest of the National-Democratic scholars was an adjunct to their politics." (page 151). The very purposes of museums were revised -- mass-cultural work among the broad masses of laborers was demanded from them, on socialist construction and class warfare. "First of all it is interesting to note how the Belorussian National-Democrats approach the role of a museum as such. The principle task of a museum is to collect, safeguard, and study objects of archeological, historical, ethnographic, and artistic interest which pertain to Belorussia (Kharlampovich-- Piatigodie Belorusskogo Gosudarstvennogo Muzeia /The Fifth Anniversary of the Belorussian State Museum"/ Nash Krai /Our Country/, No. 1, 1927, page 10). This is an old bourgeois proposition. Is a museum only a collection of interesting things? Is it only a curio cabinet? Is there not even any difference between a Soviet museum and the reactionary ones developed by students of local lore in the good old days?" (page 204), proclaimed the brigade of the Academy of Sciences. Museums were particularly blamed for not carrying on anti-religious activity but on the contrary collecting everything of value from the Catholic and Orthodox churches and the synogogues and preserving it lovingly. As a result of this reproof the museums changed completely. Everything reminiscent of the national essence of Belorussia vanished from the displays.

661 The Belorussian national movement was also charged with aiming to preserve religious feelings among the population and with